Avoided deforestation, Kenya

A conservation project under the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) scheme is applied to a heavily endangered region in Kenya to protect vital flora and fauna, and to address sources of human-wildlife conflict in a holistic, sustainable approach on a large scale.

Location

The Project area comprises 169,741 ha of dryland forest located in the southeast of Kenya. Altitudes range from approximately 450m to 1000m and the ecosystem encompasses montane forest on the slopes of the higher elevations, transitions through Acacia-Commiphora dry-land forest at mid elevations and levels at grasslanddominated savannah at the lowest elevations.

Project

The objective of the project is to protect in perpetuity those dryland Acacia-Commiphora forests that form a wildlife dispersal and migration corridor between Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks, to conserve the important biodiversity found in those forests, to provide alternative sustainable development opportunities for the local communities that live adjacent to the forests and to prevent the emissions that would otherwise occur were those dryland forests to be converted to subsistence agriculture using the *Slash and Burn* methods typical to this area of Kenya.

The project has met all of the criteria of the Climate, Community and Biodiversity (CCB) Standard for GOLD Level approval as well as being the world's first REDD Mega project (>1m tonnes per year) successfully Validated and Verified under the Verified Carbon Standard's (VCS) REDD Avoided Unplanned Mosaic Deforestation and Degradation (AUMDD) Standard.

Soil inventory coordinates were provided to the soil plot sampling teams by the GIS team, at randomly selected forest plot locations, in a subset of ranches, as well as in shambas (farms) adjacent to the project area. They sampled using the method illustrated in Wildlife Works' Standard Operating Procedure Soils.

Project achievements

Socio-economic impact:

- Numerous jobs for locals have been created.
- The project owner built an *Ecofactory* and now employs over 150 people from the local community during construction, and have since trained and employed young women from the community to sew organic cotton clothing, which are exported to the US and Europe for sale on the internet and in fashion boutiques.
- An organic greenhouse has been established to grow citrus trees, which are sold at a discount to local farmers, so they may plant a tree for shade that can also earn them income.
- The project owner has implemented a program of *Community Wildlife Scouts*, providing funding, training and logistics support to organized groups of Community Wildlife Scouts operating outside the project area but within the reference area to monitor and deter illegal activity such as charcoal burning and bush meat poaching.
- The project owner has begun to explore ecotourism opportunities which will generate more jobs.
- The project owner is particularly engaged with sustainable development and education. As of today, 18 classrooms throughout the district have been built and equipped.
- The project owner is now working with the landowners and local communities to implement forest management plans that exclude the destructive use of forest resources for fuel wood or charcoal, and as a result, the supply of wood for local charcoal use will be greatly reduced.

Environmental impact:

- The project area now provides a home and area of relative safety to several key species of interest, including an average population of African elephants (Loxodonta africana) estimated between 500 and 1000. Other notable species present on Rukinga are lion (Panthera leo), leopard (Panthera pardus), cheetah (Acinonyx jubatus), serval cat (Felis serval), spotted hyena (Crocuta crocuta), African hunting dog (Lycaon pictus) and about 12 species of ungulates, such as eland (Taurotragus oryx), Cape buffalo (Syncerus caffer) and the highly endangered Grevy's zebra (Equus grevyi). A wide range of other species are included in the area's wildlife population, among them various carnivores, primates, rodents, reptiles, amphibians, over 20 bat species and over 300 avian species. In addition to animal species, the Project Area is home to thousands of species of plants indigenous to the Tsavo ecosystem.

Checklist Projekt 300503

✓ Additionality and permanence:	according to the rules of the CCBS "Gold Status" and VCS
✓ 3rd party validated::	by Det Norske Veritas
✓ Transparency:	provided by Markit Environmental Registry
✓ Annual CO_2 reduction:	1,600,000 tCO_2e
✓ Social and environmental benefits:	as documented in our database
✓ Marketing material:	pictures available

For further information and to learn about availabilities please contact:
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